

# CALIFORNIA OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

## TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

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INTEREST AREA  
SOCIAL



### WHAT DOES A TEACHER OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE DO?

Most communities in California are home to many people who speak little or no English. Some communities have over 50 languages represented. As California's population becomes more multilingual, the need for TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) and TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (TESOL) increases. While the training requirements vary considerably for these two occupations, this guide will use the ESL designation.

Teachers of ESL perform the following tasks:

- Teach adults and children basic English language skills including reading, writing, listening, and conversation.

- Prepare course outlines and goals, sometimes according to school district guidelines or State and local requirements.
- Prepare and grade exams.
- Work with students, parents, and other teaching staff.
- Teach students using a variety of methods, such as lecture and visual demonstration.
- Assign lessons and correct homework.
- Use computers, television, overhead projectors, and other materials to aid in making lectures and presentations.
- Analyze, record, and report progress to students and/or parents.
- Take part in faculty and professional meetings, conferences, and teacher training courses.
- Select, store, order, issue, and keep count of classroom equipment and supplies.

Teachers of ESL instruct entirely in English, although the students in their classes usually have many different first languages. It is not necessary for an ESL Teacher to speak any language other than English. However, a multilingual ESL Teacher will have a better understanding of their students' experiences as they learn English and therefore be a more empathetic and skillful Teacher.

Teachers of ESL work in adult education programs, elementary schools, high schools, and colleges both in the U.S. and abroad.

### WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Important skills, knowledge, and abilities for Teachers of ESL include:

- Speaking – Talking to others to convey information effectively.

- Instructing – Teaching others how to do something.
- Learning Strategies – Selecting and using training/instructional methods and procedures appropriate for the situation when learning or teaching new things.
- Reading Comprehension – Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
- Monitoring – Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
- Education and Training – Knowledge of principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.
- English Language – Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Oral Comprehension – The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- Written Expression – The ability to communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.
- Written Comprehension – The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.

People with certain personality traits tend to be successful and happy in this career. These qualities include flexibility, tolerance, independence, maturity, ability to work as part of a team, enthusiasm for the job, and a sincere appreciation of people from different cultures.

### WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

English as a Second Language Teachers can work in a variety of settings. Some work in modern classrooms that include computers and other electronic tools. Others work in modest environments with limited resources.

Those working and living outside of the U.S. have the benefit of experiencing other cultures first

hand over a long period of time. The opportunity for travel is also available to ESL Teachers working abroad since many positions provide long holidays and paid transportation.

Teachers of ESL have the opportunity to spend time with, and get to know, people of different cultures whose life experiences may be significantly different than their own. This can be one of the most interesting and rewarding parts of the job; however, the constant effort to understand and be understood can prove to be stressful for some.

English as a Second Language Teachers working in adult schools usually express a sincere love for the work they do. They also list several advantages over teaching in a traditional elementary-through-high school environment. Among these are: (1) Since the students are themselves adults, working with parents is unnecessary, (2) most students are attending because they want to and therefore are often interested, attentive, and self-motivated, (3) behavioral problems tend to be non-existent and, (4) students treat the Teacher with respect, gratitude, and appreciation.

### *Union Membership*

Teachers of ESL generally belong to teacher's unions when employed full-time by a school district or college. However, union membership is less common for ESL Teachers who work part-time, those who work in adult schools, and those working outside the country.

### WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The numbers of working ESL Teachers in California is unknown because these workers are counted among English and Foreign Language Teachers, non-vocational education instructors in adult schools, and Elementary and Secondary School Teachers.

According to the California Department of Education, 146,884 Teachers in the State's elementary and secondary schools taught English as a second language to students during the 2001/2002 school year. This reflects an 18 percent increase from the 1999/2000 school year. The instruction was given in a variety of settings and

programs, from structured immersion to English language mainstreaming in classrooms with English-speaking students. The number of non-English speaking students in California who received this type of instruction during 2001/2002 was 1,559,244, up five percent from the 1999/2000 school year.

### ***Trends***

Nearly one in every four students in California's elementary, middle, and high schools speak limited English. These students, in turn, live with families where English is either not spoken or spoken at a limited level. This trend points to a growing need for trained professionals who can teach the English language to children and adults alike.

## **WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?**

### ***California Earnings***

Adult Literacy, Remedial Education, and  
GED Teachers and Instructors 2002 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$26.03	to	\$45.17
Average hourly wage	\$33.89		
Average annual wage	\$70,498		

Source: *Occupational Employment Survey of Employers* by EDD/LMID.

Teachers of ESL who have California teaching credentials and work in elementary or secondary schools earn wages that compare to regular Teacher salaries offered by school districts. Salaries for ESL Teachers who teach abroad vary depending on the country.

### ***Hours***

The majority of ESL jobs in the U.S. are part-time and many are in adult education programs where ESL Teachers lead day and/or evening classes. Hours are based on time in the classroom; therefore, classroom preparation must be done on the ESL Teacher's own time.

Full-time jobs in the U.S. are usually in public and private schools. There are fewer of these positions and they are much more competitive, usually being filled by experienced ESL Teachers who have Master's degrees. Full-time positions are more common overseas.

### ***Benefits***

Full-time ESL Teachers in the U.S. usually receive benefit packages that include holidays and vacations, sick leave, health insurance, and retirement plans. Part-time workers are usually paid an hourly or daily rate but no benefits. Positions for ESL Teachers abroad often provide all of the benefits of a full-time ESL Teacher in the U.S. plus additional benefits. These include free housing or a housing allowance, basic furnishings, all or part of utility costs, a baggage allowance, an allowance for local transportation, and paid travel for trips home once or twice a year. Employers may also give the ESL Teacher a bonus at the end of the contract.

## **HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?**

### ***Education and Training***

A Bachelor's degree with an ESL certificate is required for entry into this field. The certificate program in ESL is designed to prepare and qualify Teachers to work in classrooms or other educational settings where students are learning to speak, read, and write English as a second language (kindergarten through adult levels).

Although those planning for an ESL career often select English or a foreign language major, an ESL Teacher can have any major. Learning to teach English as a second language requires classes in linguistics, second language acquisition, education practices, sociology, anthropology, psychology, testing and measurement, and related subjects. Teachers of ESL with more experience and those possessing advanced degrees have the best chance for the most coveted jobs both in the U.S. and abroad.

The primary difference in focus between Master's and certificate programs is that the Master's degree (usually known as TESOL) is linguistically and theoretically oriented, whereas the certificate program is experience oriented. The ESL certificate is granted by the extension program of a university and can range from 4 to 8 courses.

Some ESL Teachers want to specialize in teaching only adults or only children. Both certificate and master's programs offer course work specifically directed toward teaching these two populations.

In addition to formal training, those who wish to teach in public or private elementary, secondary, or adult schools must also comply with those credential requirements as any other Teacher. Additionally, those who work in public schools must receive the "Multiple or Single Subject Teaching Permit with a Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development (CLAD) Emphasis." In California the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing determines these requirements.

A list of training programs, including certificate, baccalaureate and post-graduate, can be found at [www.soicc.ca.gov/ctep](http://www.soicc.ca.gov/ctep).

### ***Licensing and Certification***

Once a degree has been earned, many aspiring ESL Teachers then complete a training program leading to an ESL certificate. The certificate, coupled with paid or volunteer teaching experience, qualifies the applicant to teach in many U.S. adult schools as well as schools abroad.

### ***Continuing Education***

Teachers of ESL who are Elementary or Secondary School Teachers must complete continuing education credits required by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

## **HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?**

English as a Second Language Teachers should begin their job search while still in school. This can be done through talking to people at campus language centers and placement offices. Becoming an active member of professional organizations can also help. Since experience is vital, volunteering or interning at a local school can be worthwhile. Attending conferences is another way to make contact with employers and other ESL Teachers.

Those wanting to teach in elementary, secondary, or adult education programs should apply with individual school districts. Private institutions are listed in the yellow pages under Schools. California job openings can be found at various job-listing systems including CalJOBS<sup>SM</sup> at [www.caljobs.ca.gov](http://www.caljobs.ca.gov) or at America's Job Bank at [www.ajb.dni.us](http://www.ajb.dni.us).

For other occupational and wage information and a listing of the largest employers in any county, visit the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Web page at [www.calmis.ca.gov](http://www.calmis.ca.gov). Find further job search assistance from your nearest Job Service office [www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm](http://www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm) or the closest One-Stop site listed on the California WorkNet site, [www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop](http://www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop).

## **WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?**

Teachers of ESL with sufficient experience and aptitude can promote into administrative positions. Those with advanced degrees can teach or do research in colleges or universities.

## **OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CATESOL)  
21 C Orinda Way #362  
Orinda, CA 94563  
[www.catesol.org](http://www.catesol.org)

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)  
700 South Washington Street, Suite 200  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(703) 836-0774  
(888) 547-3369  
[www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org)

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC)  
P.O. Box 944270  
1900 Capitol Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 445-7254  
(888) 921-2682  
[www.ctc.ca.gov](http://www.ctc.ca.gov)

Employment Projections by Occupation  
[www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm)

Employment and Wages by Occupation  
[www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup\\$/OESS\\$.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup$/OESS$.htm)

## **RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES**

Teachers, Elementary School	No. 10
Teachers, Secondary School	No. 57

**OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES****SOC** (*Standard Occupational Classification*)

Elementary School Teachers, Except Special  
Education 25-2021  
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special  
and Vocational Education 25-2031  
Adult Literacy, Remedial Education, and GED  
Teachers and Instructors 25-3011

**O\*NET** (*Occupational Information Network*)

Elementary School Teachers, Except Special  
Education 25-2021.00  
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special  
and Vocational Education 25-2031.00  
Adult Literacy, Remedial Education, and  
GED Teachers and Instructors 25-3011.00

**OES** (*Occupational Employment Statistics*)

Teachers, Elementary School 31305  
Teachers, Secondary School 31308  
Teachers, Non-Vocational Education 31317

**DOT** (*Dictionary of Occupational Titles*)

Teachers, Adult Education 099.227-030